

# Christian Community

Volume 7 No. 2

February, 1955

## World Council Accents Total Witness

The meeting of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held at Evanston, Illinois, this past summer has made the people of the United States aware that there is such a thing as the World Council. At least the members of Protestant churches have had brought home to them the *international*, if not the *supranational* character of the church. And where they are given the opportunity, we may hope that they will rise to a new consciousness of the mission of the Church and the meaning of the Christian life.

### An Indivisible Gospel

At several points American churchmen may be in for a surprise when they really stop to consider what Evanston actually said and what it assumed concerning our faith and our commitment as Christians.

For example, the reports which came from the Assembly give little comfort to the point of view that religion is a purely individual matter. In spite of the warnings that came from certain quarters that the European advocates of a dialectical theology would cut the nerve of action directed toward solving social problems or make such action meaningless, and in spite of some differences as to *how* faith is related to social responsibility, there was no serious disagreement that our Christian gospel deals with the whole of life and our Christian faith must be expressed in social action.

Neither did the documents which emerged from Evanston speak of an "individual" gospel and a "social" gospel as if there were two gospels, or at



best a gospel made up of two different segments which could be handled separately or alternately. It was assumed that Jesus Christ was not only the Hope of each man but the Hope of the world. It was stated in the Message that our faith not only leads us to personal courage and gratitude, but also that "our Christian hope directs us toward our neighbor" and to "act as we pray in every area of life;" and again: "It is not enough that Christians should seek peace for themselves. They must seek justice for others." Even the most strictly "theological" discussion of the Church reminds us that the unity of the Church, and the gifts given to the Church are "not for the sake of the Church . . . but for the sake of the world." It was made plain throughout that Jesus Christ is Lord of all of life and a commitment to Him is a total, not a fractional, commitment.

### Social Concerns Loom Large

If Evanston recognized that there is one indivisible Gospel for all of life, it did not stop with a grudging or vague acknowledgment that social righteousness and service to the community are "also" important. It gave positive

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## SCHOOL LEADERS LOOK AT RELIGION

Thirty-nine persons, most of them active members of Evangelical and Reformed churches, and, by vocation, teachers and principals in public schools in and around St. Louis, Missouri, attended the second conference on Religion and Public Education sponsored by the Commission on Christian Social Action, on December 29 and 30. The conference was held in the excellent setting provided by the buildings of the Eden Theological Seminary, in Webster Groves. About a dozen ministers of Evangelical and Reformed churches in the area shared with the educators in some of the discussions.

Leaders for the two-day workshop were Professor L. Thomas Hopkins, recently retired member of the faculty of Teacher's College, Columbia University, and Dr. Rolfe Lanier Hunt, Executive Director of the Department of Religion and Public Education of the National Council of Churches. Arrangements for the entire program were made by the Committee on Christian Social Action of the Missouri Valley Synod, of which the Reverend Robert Froeschner is chairman.

A good part of the time was spent in small group conferences as the educators and ministers talked together of the place of religion in the program of the public school. No effort to reach conclusions was made, but it was agreed that this kind of sharing of viewpoints was of much value to all who participated.

The program featured two addresses by Dr. Hopkins, and one by Dr. Hunt. The conference was opened by Professor Hopkins' presentation of a "General Statement and Definition of the Problem of Religion and Public Education." This address and Dr. Hopkins' second one, on "The Psychology of Values,"

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## NEWS FROM THE FIELD

### WORK ON COUNTY PROBLEMS

"Desegregation," "Christians and Politics" and "Problems of Today's Youth"—these subjects attracted much attention in a series of panel discussions sponsored by the St. Louis County Christian Social Action Committee, of which Mrs. Marie McCulloch, member of the new Kirkwood Evangelical and Reformed Church, is chairman.

For the discussion on "Desegregation" leaders were Dean William Sweet of the Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis; Mr. G. Vossbrink, Superintendent of the St. Louis County Schools, and Mr. Ralph Smith, County Juvenile Probation Officer. It was the first meeting of its kind in St. Louis County, and attracted much favorable publicity. Leaders from the nineteen St. Louis County Evangelical and Reformed Churches took part.

In an effort to inform Christian voters concerning candidates for political office and their ideas, the Committee arranged to have candidates for Congress and for several important County posts discuss various issues in a public meeting. Good questions were asked from the floor, among them being some related to the employment of Negroes in public office. The Committee feels that a direct result of the meeting was the appointment of a qualified Negro social worker for work under County supervision. An effort is being made now to find a Negro lawyer qualified to serve as assistant prosecuting attorney.

Current problems of youth were discussed at a third large meeting sponsored by the Committee. In charge of this meeting was Dr. Paul Zentay, president of the Missouri Social Hygiene Association. He was aided by the following panel of resource people: A. D. Buchmueller, director of the St. Louis County Mental Health Division; Mrs. Jules Kopp, of the Missouri Council for Children and Youth; Dr. Val Satterfield, youth consultant for the St. Louis Police Department; James Connor, of the St. Louis Crime Commission; John Stevens, magistrate of St. Louis County; Reverend Louis V. Huber, director of Fellowship Center; and Charles M. Shaw, Clayton attorney.

The County Committee on Christian Social Action works closely with the Missouri Valley Synod Committee on Christian Social Action and its chair-

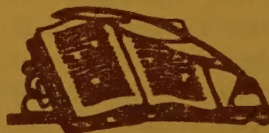
man, the Reverend Robert Froeschner. It aims to keep the Christians of St. Louis County informed and concerned about social issues on which action can be and should be taken. The panel discussions mentioned here have been well attended, and much interest in the several themes discussed has been evident.

### PLAN COMMUNITY CENTER

Meridian Church, at Sherwood, Oregon, near Portland, is about to complete work on "Samaritan House," on which much volunteer labor has been expended in the last several months. "Samaritan House" is to be a center for many community projects. It will provide space for an active program of Christian education, but also serve as a gathering place for all kinds of community groups.

### U. N. IN COLORADO

The Colorado Council of Churches, during the first week in December, sponsored a series of United Nations Seminars in five centers throughout the state, seeking to provide church leaders with an opportunity to learn about and to discuss various aspects of the program of the United Nations. The Reverend F. Nelsen Schlegel, Field Secretary of the Commission on Christian Social Action, assisted with the program, leading the discussion on "The Church and the United Nations." Three professors of International Relations and Sociology and two leading church women also participated in the five seminars,



*Tomorrow Is Today*, by James H. Robinson (Christian Education Press, \$2) is a fascinating and provocative account of what the author saw, observed, and heard in hundreds of meetings with leaders and common people in Europe, Asia, and Africa. He differentiates between Communism and Nationalism, which are active forces in our world, and makes some sane suggestions as to how the Christian Church and the United States can meet effectively these challenges. The author emphasizes the role of world leadership placed upon America, and stresses the need for a consistent strategy in international affairs. Those interested in understanding the international forces at work in our world will find this book stimulating.

leading the thinking concerning the political organization and function of the UN, concerning possible areas for Charter Review, and concerning the technical assistance aspects of the UN program.

Seminar sessions extending each day from 3:00 p. m. until 9:30 p. m. were held in Loveland, Fort Collins, Alamosa, Pueblo and Burlington.

### HEAR ASIA EXPERT

For eight years a group of Evangelical and Reformed Churches in the north end of Philadelphia have conducted a cooperative School of World Relations. Meeting on six consecutive Sunday evenings, they endeavor to give serious attention to various aspects of the church's concern—home missions, international missions, and Christian citizenship.

For the closing session of the School this winter the subject was "India" Through the courtesy of the State Department the speaker for this meeting was Dr. Kenneth P. Landon, Officer in Charge of Thai and Malayan Affairs in the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs.

In previous sessions the School featured the film, *City Story*, a forum on The City Church, and the film *Haven of Hope* dealing with the Evangelical and Reformed Church's ministry to lepers in India.

Churches sponsoring the program included Christ, Grace, Mount Hermon, Oak Lane, Olivet, Salem-Zion, Tabor, and the host church, Heidelberg.

## Speaking of Books

Dr. Robinson believes that the Christian Church and Western Democracy still have time and the resources to turn the revolutionary forces in our world toward brotherhood and peace.

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Groups concerned to consider the problem of narcotics and the relation of the church to it will welcome a revised edition of the pamphlet, *Narcotics: The Churches and the Problem of Narcotic Addiction*, published by the National Council of Churches, (20c). It includes a brief analytical study prepared by Dr. Paul L. Tilden, associate executive director of the Department of Pastoral Services; a statement adopted by the General Board; and suggestions for action.



## World Council Accents Total Witness

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testimony to the urgency of Christian action in society and to the church's obligation to come to grips with the concrete problems of our social, political, and economic order. Four out of the six Sections in which, apart from the consideration of the Main Theme, most of the working time of the delegates was devoted deal with problems lying directly within the field of Christian social action. Look at the topics:

Section I—Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches.

Section II—The Mission of the Church to those Outside Her Life.

Section III—The Responsible Society in a World Perspective.

Section IV—Christians in the Struggle for World Community.

Section V—The Church Amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions.

Section VI—The Christian in His Vocation.

Recently a group of representatives of our denominational agencies were considering which of these agencies are the appropriate channels for promoting the study of the World Council reports in our churches and for following through on the findings and actions. One person present observed, "It will be quite a shock when some of our people find out that two-thirds of it deals with social action!"

This does not mean that theological inquiry, church unity, and evangelism are less important than the problems of

social organization, world order, race relations, and daily work. It illustrates very clearly however, that these latter are not options or fringe interests. They represent an integral part of our Christian commitment. They are at the heart of the church's concern.

### What is Planned

The "follow-up" is under way. The General Council of our church has taken action to send the basic report, *Evanston Speaks*, to each of our pastors. Others may secure it for fifty cents from the World Council of Churches. This should be preserved for frequent reference in the years ahead. For the member churches are asked to study it and take appropriate action.

The Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of Churches has been assigned the responsibility of preparing two kinds of study guides to help groups in local churches to study the reports and take action upon them. One of these will be an "over-all" guide, offering suggestions for a general study of the report. In addition, there will be more extensive study courses based on each of the several section reports, as for example, "The Responsible Society."

Announcement will be made in these pages when the study guides are available. Provisions will also be made for reporting the results of study in the congregations, so that the thought and action of the local church may be reflected in the corporate report made by the denomination to the World Council some time prior to the Third Assembly.

**Christian social responsibility is grounded in the mighty acts of God, who is revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. He has created the world, and all time is embraced within His eternal purpose. He moves and acts within history as the ever-living God. The center of world history is the earthly life, the cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ . . . In Him God entered history decisively, to judge and to forgive. In Him are revealed the present plight of man, and the end toward which the world is moving.**

**He has established with men a living relationship of promise and commandment in which they are called to live in faithful obedience to His purpose . . . In the call to responsible social action, the promise and the commandment of the righteous and loving God require us to recognize that in every human being Christ Himself comes to claim our service.**

**—Report of Section III, Second Assembly World Council of Churches**

## TO COMBAT DELINQUENCY

The December 15 issue of *Social Legislation Information Service*, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D. C., gives a useful "Outline for follow-up action on recommendations of the National Conference on Juvenile Delinquency." (25c per copy from the above address).

There were 475 participants in the National Conference, which was held in Washington last June under the sponsorship of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. These people represented every area of our national life: home, church, school, industry, and government. The report of the conference contained many recommendations, some of them calling for action at the local level. Some of these must be carried out by responsible public officials, but most of them call for help from voluntary groups, and particularly from individuals.

The bulletin of the Information Service aims to supplement the Conference report. In effect it provides a detailed outline of the "next steps" that ought to be taken, at many levels, in helping to understand and to meet the needs of modern youth. This outline will be most provocative to groups in churches which are really concerned about doing something constructive for the young people of the land.

## SCHOOL LEADERS LOOK AT RELIGION

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emphasized the idea that religion and the public schools are both concerned with acts of behavior, and with efforts to improve the values which are represented in behavior.

Dr. Hunt gave the conference a general discussion of the program of the National Council of Churches in studying the relation existing between organized religion and the public schools. Attention was drawn to a series of recent statements by several denominational bodies and by public schoolmen who are concerned about a proper emphasis upon moral and spiritual values among today's school children.

Several members of the faculty of Washington University served as resource leaders. They were Dr. Charles A. Lee, Dr. Morris Eames, and Dr. Raymond Callahan.



### Christian Community

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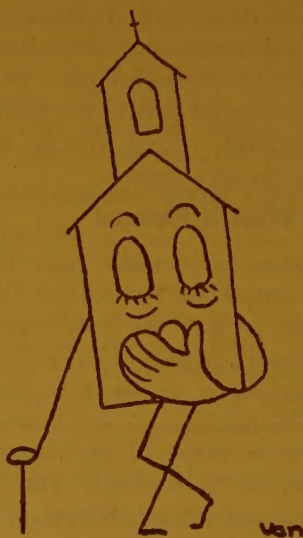
## COMMITMENT— FOR WHAT?

As this issue of *Christian Community* goes into the mails, over one hundred fifty delegates from thirty-four synods and a number of related boards and agencies will be meeting with our denominational Commissions on Evangelism, Stewardship, and Christian Social Action. The occasion will be a conference on Christian Commitment and Christian Community. This phrase should itself recall our church to a fresh realization that in Christian terms commitment is always commitment of self to Christ and commitment for a wider end than self—the informing of all the communities of which are part with the mind and spirit of Christ.

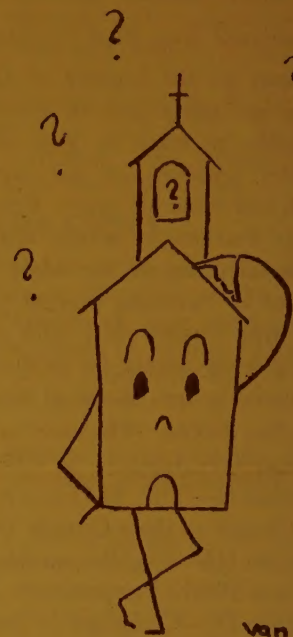
The Commission on Christian Social Action welcomes this united delving into the total meaning of our Christian discipleship. It has always insisted that our witness and effort in the social order is rooted in our Christian obedience, and that faith which does not work out to leaven the social order is not only dead, but impossible. The Cincinnati Conference is the outgrowth of this conviction.

Meaningful as the conference itself may be, however, it is not an end in itself. It is a means toward helping every church in our denomination carry on in its own parish a program of self-examination and rededication to the Christian life in its fullness. Succeeding issues of this newsletter will report the suggestions and the helps which grow out of the Cincinnati conference, to the end that all of our members may have a better understanding of what our commitment means and how we may discharge our trust both in the church and beyond it.

## DO YOU KNOW A CHURCHMAN WHO IS



or



Whether you and others on the rolls of your church are sleepy or puzzled or wide awake and ready to work you will find help in

## SOME ABC'S OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION

Written by the Associate Secretary of the Commission on Christian Social Action, the Reverend F. Nelsen Schlegel, this twenty-cent handbook discusses *why* Christian Social Action is an essential part of the mission of the Church—in fact, he calls it the New Missionary Frontier,—*what* Christians can do, and *how* they can proceed to do it.

You will enjoy it—the author's understanding and helpful comments and the charming pen-and-ink drawings (like those above) prepared for the booklet by his daughter, Miss V. Evangeline Schlegel. Get some extra copies from the office of the Commission on Christian Social Action, (20 cents each, six for one dollar, \$15 per hundred). Give them to your consistory or council members, your leaders in the Churchmen's Brotherhood, Women's Guild, and Youth Fellowship, your social action committee members—and don't forget that couples' club that is looking for something "real" to bite into.

## HAVERFORD OFFERS COURSES ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Because of the recent emphasis on social and technical assistance as carried on by private, governmental and inter-governmental agencies, Haverford College is offering a Graduate Curriculum in Social and Technical Assistance. The curriculum is open to men and women who hold the Bachelor's degree from recognized institutions. Ten academic semester courses and a thesis based on a research project are required for the degree of Master of Arts.

Several fellowships are available for properly qualified persons who may be interested in this effort to prepare men and women for leadership in a program

that aims toward the development of a peaceful world society.

The brochure which announces this new curriculum carries the following provocative paragraph:

"All who engage in assistance programs should be both emotionally and intellectually qualified for the task. As men and women of good will they should be able to work harmoniously with people of different races and under difficult and primitive conditions. They should be able to appreciate the values of foreign cultures and understand the basis for variant economic and political theories."